

preparing

Preparation is a key element of any significant celebration in our lives. Baptism is the first significant moment of celebration in our journey of faith. So, when a child is presented for baptism the family will be invited to participate in some form of preparation.

In this diocese there are a number of ways that families are assisted in this preparation. In many parishes it is now customary to have baptism teams - a group of parishioners trained by the parish for this task. The team undertakes either to meet people individually in their homes or to host a pre-baptism meeting in the parish. In both these instances parents/guardians have an opportunity to hear and chat about the meaning and practicalities of the ceremony. Publications, such as this one, are also made available to parents/guardians through the parish.



A FAMILY PRAYER

Loving God, we ask your blessing on our family. Watch over us and guide us. Make our home a place of love and safety, a place of peace and joy, a place where we grow in faith together. Amen

REGISTRATION

It is usual for the name of the child to be entered in the baptismal book in the same form as in the civil register. The priest will confirm all such details with you before completing the entry in the parish's baptismal register.

GODPARENTS

Godparents must be baptised and confirmed Catholics who are committed to sharing their faith with their godchild. They must normally be sixteen years old or more. While it is possible to have one godparent, there is usually one male and one female godparent. It is permitted for a baptised non-Catholic to act as a "witness" (instead of one godparent).

RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS (RCIA)

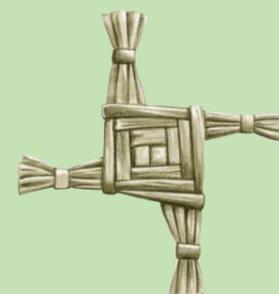
RCIA is the process that is used for adults who seek baptism or full membership of the Church. This process is marked by a series of rites that, over time, take place in the local parish and that typically culminates with full initiation at the Easter Vigil.

GETTING READY

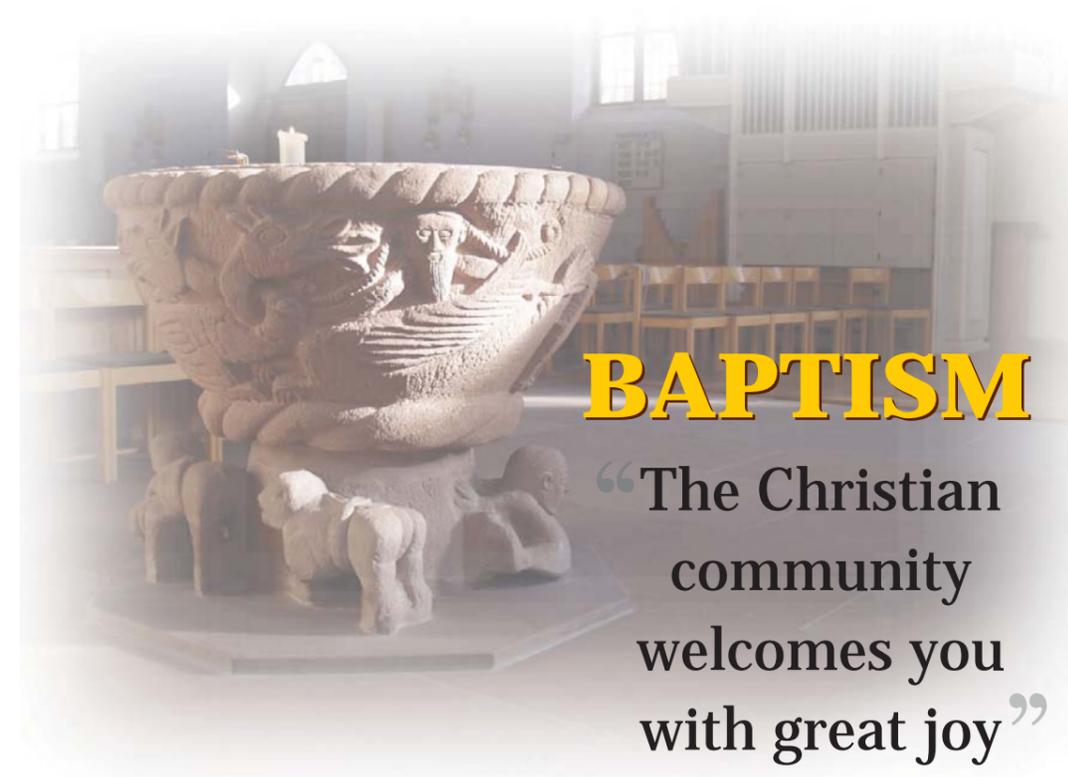
Contact your parish office/priest to arrange for the preparation and celebration of Baptism. Give plenty of notice.

On the day of Baptism bring a white shawl and your child's baptismal candle to the church. Keep this candle safe, it may be needed at the time of First Communion and Confirmation. This candle could also be lit on your child's birthday or on other special family occasions.

A GUIDE TO SACRAMENTS



Diocese of Kildare & Leighlin



BAPTISM

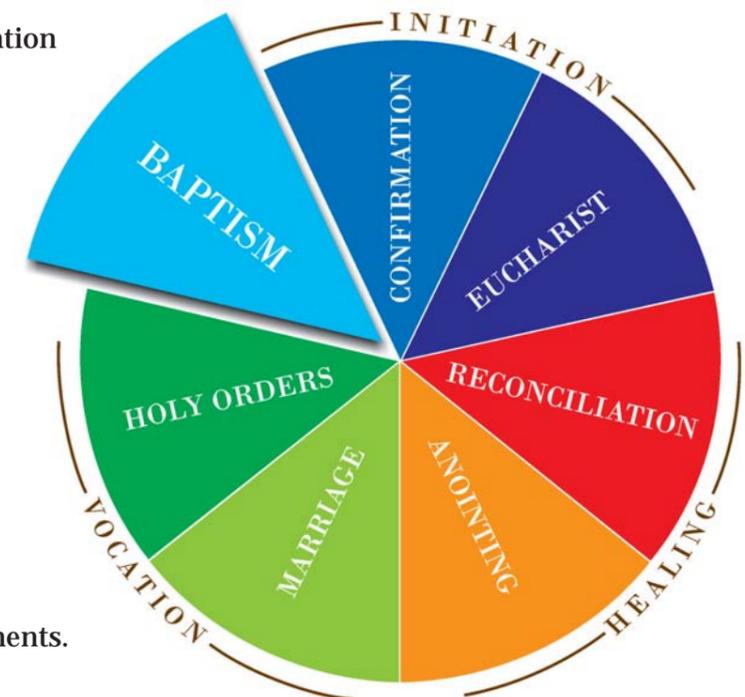
“The Christian community welcomes you with great joy”

RITE OF BAPTISM

Baptism is one of the three sacraments of initiation

along with Confirmation and Eucharist.

It is the Church's sacrament of welcome and the gateway to all the other sacraments.



understanding

Baptism celebrates the love God has for each of us. Through its celebration, the Church welcomes a new member and affirms him/her as a child of God, a follower of Christ, a member of the Body of Christ and a temple of the Holy Spirit.

Beyond Baptism, the journey of faith is to become what we already are - daughters and sons of God, brothers and sisters in Christ. We make this journey in our daily lives, hopefully with the support of family and Church community.

When we celebrate Baptism the whole community is called to welcome this new member. The celebration reminds us of the need to support one another in our journey of faith. Baptism invites us to be active members of the Body of Christ - the Church.

Of course, the central role in passing on faith belongs to parents/guardians. It is they who will be the role models of faith for their children. It is in the home that children need to learn and experience trust, love, faith, hope and commitment in order for their faith to grow.

Within the rite of baptism itself the presence of godparents reminds parents/guardians that they are not alone in this task. Their loving affection for the baptised child expresses the care of the whole Christian family.

Baptism is the common starting point of all Christians. It means that there is a fundamental equality between us all - old and young, rich and poor, men and women, native and stranger. All Christians are graced with the same dignity. The valid Baptism of non-Catholics is respected as much as Catholic Baptism. This means that Baptism need never be repeated.



'The seven sacraments touch all the stages and the important moments of the Christian life: they give birth and increase, healing and mission to the Christian's life of faith. There is thus a certain resemblance between the stages of natural life and the stages of the spiritual life'.

Catechism 1210

'Holy Baptism is the basis of the whole Christian life, the gateway to life in the Spirit, and the door which gives access to the other sacraments. Through Baptism we are freed from sin...we become members of Christ, are incorporated into the Church and made sharers in her mission'

Catechism 1213

'You have become a new creation, clothed in Christ.

See in this white garment the outward sign of your Christian dignity.'

Baptism Rite

'There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus'

Galatians 3:28

celebrating

The Rite of Baptism contains a wonderful sequence of movement, symbols and gestures. It usually begins at the door of the Church, proceeds into the Church to hear the Word of God, moves to the font and concludes at the altar.

At the door of the Church - Welcome and Sign of the Cross

The children are presented to those who have gathered and who now represent the Church community. The parents/guardians proclaim their children's names, and their own commitment to sharing the gospel with them. The community welcomes the children and the sign of the cross is made on their foreheads, "claiming" them for Christ.



At the Ambo - Word of God

The people move to where the Word of God is proclaimed, to listen to the readings and to pray together. The Word of God is an ongoing source of nourishment for all of us on our faith journey.



At the Font - Anointings and Baptism

Before Baptism the priest prays to God to protect the children from evil and then anoints them. The baptismal water is blessed. Parents/guardians and godparents profess their faith in Christ. The children are then baptised.



Accompanying Rites - Symbols and Actions

A series of gestures follow. These are joyful ways of expressing what we mean by baptism. Each child is anointed on the head with the perfumed oil of Chrism. The children are clothed with a white garment and their baptismal candles are lit from the Easter candle. Finally, the priest prays over the mouth and ears of each child that they may come to hear and proclaim the Gospel.



At the Altar - Final Blessing

All join in praying the Our Father and this is followed by blessings for the parents/guardians and all present. We pray for and look forward to the future celebrations of Confirmation and Eucharist that will bring these children to full membership of the Church.

